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Service

**Wildlife and
Fisheries Staff**

Action Plan For The '90s

Rise to the FUTURE

Fish Your National Forests

Rise To The Future: Action Plan For The '90s

USDA Forest Service

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Executive Summary 1

II. Introduction 3

III. Action Plan Update 5

A. Program Development 6

B. Technical Capabilities 8

C. Cooperation and Public Information 10

D. Fish and Fishing Economics 12

E. Fisheries Personnel 13

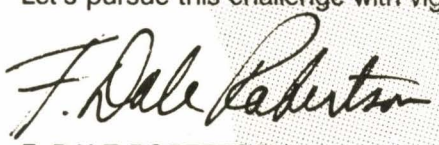
IV. Summary 15

Preface

The Forest Service manages some of the most valuable fisheries resources in the Nation. Whether we are referring to the bass fisheries in Florida, the walleye fisheries in the Great Lake states, or the trout and salmon fisheries in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, the National Forests and Grasslands support a world-class fisheries deserving first class care. The important role we have in fish habitat management will become even more significant as the demand for commercial, subsistence, and recreational fishing and conservation of biological diversity continues to grow on National Forests and Grasslands.

The Forest Service, through multiple use conservation, is responsible for the protection, restoration, and enhancement of the fisheries resources. During the short time since it was first implemented, the Forest Service's Rise to the Future fisheries program has been very successful in helping the Forest Service, along with its many partners, step out ahead in being a leader in fish habitat management. It is through the growth of this program that we will continue to maintain this posture in the management of this valuable resource and for meeting projected demands for its use. The Forest Service, with its partners, will see that clean water and fishable habitats are available for the public to enjoy for the years to come.

Let's pursue this challenge with vigor and have fun doing it. Let's go fishing!



F. DALE ROBERTSON
Chief

Executive Summary

The Rise to the Future Fisheries Program (RTTF) was developed and implemented in 1987 to work with partners to improve the quality of the fisheries habitats on National Forests and Grasslands, recover threatened and endangered aquatic species, and to improve the quality of the aquatic habitats. It was also designed to provide for increased fishing opportunities for all anglers on National Forests and Grasslands.

In 1987, an action plan was approved to carry the direction of the program to the field and to assist the Regions, Forests, Districts, and Stations in its implementation. Its purpose was to 1) enhance fisheries program identification by increasing the awareness of fish habitat management, 2) use the best management technologies for increasing habitat management efficiency, 3) increase public participation and awareness in fisheries management within the Forest Service (FS), 4) incorporate valid economic techniques in the decision making process, and 5) maintain a highly skilled workforce of fisheries biologists with a broad understanding of aquatic ecosystems.

Rise to the Future has been extremely successful, bringing the Forest Service well into the lead as a fisheries habitat management agency.

The Forest Service has developed strong partnerships with major fisheries conservation groups, including signing Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with six constituency groups.

A National Forest Service/Trout Unlimited (TU) Partnership Coordinator position was established to coordinate Trout Unlimited volunteer efforts on National Forests.

A new Forest Service position was established for Regions 1, 4, and 6 to coordinate the management of the Columbia River Basin anadromous fisheries.

Significant on-the-ground work has been accomplished in cooperation with partners in improving aquatic habitats and increasing fishing opportunities.

The fisheries budget for the National Forest System (NFS) has quadrupled since 1986, reaching $41 million in 1991. The fisheries research budget has increased to $4.2 million during the same time period.

The number of fisheries biologists has increased from 110 in 1986 to 245 by 1991.

Public awareness of the important role the Forest Service has in fish habitat management and of the fishing opportunities available has increased significantly.

In early 1989, the Forest Service developed the Recreational Fisheries Policy to further increase emphasis of recreational fishing on National Forests and Grasslands. It was designed to form an internal partnership between RTTF and the National Recreational Strategy where both programs serve the recreational angler. In 1990, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) joined the Forest Service in signing the Policy which set in motion the strengthening of existing programs and partnerships in the management of recreational fishing on almost one half billion acres of federally administered lands.

In August 1989, representatives from NFS, Research, and various partners met in Anchorage, Alaska, to review program accomplishments. In January 1991, a working group consisting of management and research specialists met to develop national strategies for strengthening the tie between RTTF and Every Species Counts, the Forest Service's Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species Program (TES). During these reviews, additional program emphasis areas were identified to further the success of RTTF.

The following is an updated action plan for the Rise to the Future Program that addresses recreational fishing emphasis as outlined in the FS/BLM Recreational Fisheries Policy and emphasis needs identified during the Anchorage and the aquatic TES reviews. It also reflects program growth that has occurred over the past 4 years:

Provide necessary direction for fisheries resource enhancement and for the management of commodity-oriented resources that are environmentally acceptable as outlined in the 1990 Resource Planning Act (RPA) Program.

Develop/update Forest fisheries programs to display goals and objectives based on resource needs and user demands and be supported by Forest Plan direction.

Improve reporting of accomplishments so that they more accurately reflect program investments and are more understandable to cooperators and users.

Increase involvement of Research Stations in upgrading and standardizing technology involved in fishery and aquatic ecosystem management.

Emphasize recreational fishing to ensure customer satisfaction.

Emphasize the development of internal and external partnerships with cooperators being involved in program development and implementation.

Develop an integrated approach to aquatic TES management and research emphasizing ecosystem and biodiversity concepts that will further the recovery of aquatic threatened and endangered species, and conservation of sensitive species and prevent the need for future listing.

Strengthen the scientific foundation of resource inventory, habitat protection and enhancement, and monitoring techniques.

Ensure that fisheries expertise is available for all administrative units that manage fisheries resources.

Improve the technical and managerial skills among Forest Service fisheries biologists.

This updated action plan is designed to ensure the continual success of the Forest Service's RTTF Fisheries Program. Strengthened further by the FS/BLM Recreational Fisheries Policy, RTTF will provide the necessary direction needed to manage the quality of the fisheries resources on the National Forests and Grasslands and to ensure that the growing fishing public has a place to go fishing. The Forest Service, along with its growing number of external partners, is headed into the 1990's with a fisheries program designed to meet not only the demands being placed on the fisheries resource today, but those that will be faced in the future.

Introduction

Resource

The USDA Forest Service manages 191 million acres in the National Forest System which includes 2.2 million acres of lakes and reservoirs, 128,000 miles of fishable rivers and streams, and 16,500 miles of coast and shoreline. These waters produce valuable habitats for hundreds of inland and salmon and steelhead fish species. In California, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington, over 50 percent of the remaining spawning and rearing habitats for salmon and steelhead are found on the National Forests and totals approximately 15,000 miles of streams. In Alaska, the Forest Service manages 30,000 miles of salmon and steelhead producing streams which make up 27 percent of Alaska's anadromous fish habitat. Further, these waters support 41 threatened and endangered fish species and 92 sensitive fish species.

Streams and lakes on the National Forests provide excellent fishing for sport, subsistence, and commercial fishing users. Recent surveys show that 69 million Americans participate in some sort of recreational fishing each year. Sport fishing is one of the most popular outdoor recreational activities in America; second only to swimming. A large percentage of this national use occurs along the streams, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and ponds located within the National Forests and Grasslands. Recreational fishing use on National Forests is expected to continue to increase as access to private lands becomes more restricted. In addition, demands for non-consumptive uses of the fisheries resources are also increasing, including fish viewing, interpretive use, and environmental interest.

Program History

In 1985, the American Fisheries Society evaluated the Forest Service fisheries program to determine program effectiveness in meeting current and projected resource needs and user demands. In response to this evaluation, a task force was formed, led by Mike Barton, Regional Forester, Alaskan Region, to improve fisheries habitat management on National Forests. The work of this task force resulted in the development of the "Rise to the Future" (RTTF) Fisheries Program which was signed by Chief Dale Robertson in March 1987. This exciting program was designed to increase emphasis of fisheries management within the Forest Service by improving the quality of the aquatic habitats and increasing fishing opportunities through the use of partnerships. The fisheries management goals stemming from this direction are:

1. Provide opportunities for the public to use and enjoy the fisheries resources on the National Forests.

2. Maintain and enhance the fish producing capabilities of the habitats on the Forests.

3. Improve communication, coordination, planning, and involvement of all who have an interest in management of National Forest fishery resources.

4. Improve program effectiveness in meeting Forest Service responsibilities for fish habitat management.

In the 4 years following its implementation, RTTF has been extremely successful, bringing the Forest Service well into the lead as a fisheries habitat management agency.

In 1988, the Sport Fishing Institute met with the Forest Service to further increase emphasis of recreational fishing on the National Forests by forming an internal partnership between the two Forest Service Programs; RTTF and the National Recreation Strategy. The intent was to coordinate these programs to better serve recreational users. In 1989, a task force was formed, led by Butch Marita, Regional Forester, Eastern Region, and given the responsibility of developing the new Forest Service Recreational Fisheries Policy. The goals of this policy are:

1. Understand and respond to the needs and values of current and potential recreational fisheries users and other interested publics.

2. Expand recreational fisheries use and opportunities to optimize resource potentials.

3. Use appropriate marketing tools to enhance recreational fishing opportunities.

4. Develop and strengthen partnerships for the overall management of recreational fisheries.

5. Recognize and institutionalize agency commitment to recreational fisheries.

In early 1990, the BLM joined the Forest Service in signing this policy which set direction for strengthening existing programs and partnerships in the management of recreational fishing on almost one half billion acres of federally administered lands.

In early 1991, the Forest Service initiated efforts to better coordinate its Fisheries and Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species programs. The working group identified strategies that would allow the Forest Service to take advantage of its opportunity to become a leader in the conservation of vulnerable aquatic resources. The strategies are intended to bridge the RTTF and Every Species Counts Action Plans. The strategies are:

1. Develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of those individuals involved in the aquatic TES program.

2. Develop Regional, Forest, and Station programs for the recovery of aquatic threatened and endangered species, and conservation of sensitive species and for preventing the need for future listing.

3. Foster a strong commitment to manage for the recovery of aquatic threatened and endangered species, and conservation of sensitive species at all levels of the Forest Service.

The aquatic TES strategies will be used throughout the Forest Service in the development of Regional, Station, and Area Strategies.

Action Plan Update

This document is an updated action plan for the RTTF Fisheries Program that builds on the many successes already evident in the program. It includes increased emphasis in recreational fishing as outlined in the new FS/BLM Recreational Fisheries Policy, coordinates management direction for aquatic threatened and endangered species with the recently completed "Every Species Counts" action plan, addresses new emphasis areas that have surfaced through program growth, and emphasizes the rounding out of multiple-use management of natural resources as outlined in the 1990 RPA Program.

Program emphasis under RTTF is to better institutionalize fisheries and aquatic ecosystem management within the Forest Service, ensure that fisheries direction is fully integrated into the Forest planning process and strengthen the scientific foundation for monitoring and managing the fisheries resources. In addition to improving the quality of the aquatic habitats and increasing fishing opportunities, emphasis is also being placed on expanding recreational fishing use to provide for increased "customer" satisfaction.

Throughout the implementation of this action plan, it is imperative that a close working relationship be developed and maintained between external and internal partners. For maximum program effectiveness, involvement with Forest Service Research, State and Private, Recreation, Watershed, and other staff units should occur at all levels within the agency. At a minimum, external participation must include the States, constituency groups, and fishing public.

This action plan is divided into five categories: Program Development; Technical Capabilities; Cooperation and Public Information; Fish and Fishing Economics; and Fisheries Personnel. For each category, there are action items along with completion dates, administrative responsibilities (WO, RO, SO, RD, and Stations refer to Washington Office, Regional Office, Supervisor's Office, Ranger District, and Research Stations, respectively), and a list of supporting components further describing the actions to be taken.

A. Program Development

As a result of RTTF and partnerships, the fisheries budget has increased four-fold between 1986 and 1991 for the National Forest System and more than doubled for Forest Service Research. Funding increases appropriated by Congress reflect strong constituent support for the Forest Service fisheries program and the strong public voice for sound fisheries management. Program growth has been very successful in increasing the protection of existing habitats and increasing the quality of much of the aquatic habitat on the Forests.

Current emphasis of the RTTF Program is to ensure that each Forest has developed fishery program direction and has identified strategies in obtaining program objectives. Fishery programs should display realistic goals and quantifiable objectives as presented in Forest Plans and supported by strong scientific information. They also should accurately identify current habitat conditions and the desired future conditions. These programs also should identify habitat enhancement opportunities, protection needs, roles of the staffs and other partners, funding, personnel needs, and implementation schedules necessary for accomplishing identified program goals.

Properly developed, a healthy, aggressive fisheries program will give the Forest Service a positive image the public can support. Program direction must have the support and ownership of line and staff officers, partners, and customers in order to be fully effective. This program not only identifies direction as to where the Forest should be headed in managing its fisheries resources, but it accurately defines the accomplishments and describes how they contribute to the goals.

Action Items

Each Forest and Station is to develop and continually update multi-year fisheries programs to include goals and objectives that reflect resource needs based on desired future conditions and user demands. Land and Resource Management Plans and out year budgets are to be updated, amended, or clarified with supporting implementation documents as necessary to better reflect this additional fisheries management emphasis.

1992 - RO, SO, RD, Stations

* Emphasize communication and interaction among fisheries managers, fisheries researchers, professional societies, and various publics.

* Solicit customer input with user satisfaction being used as a key measure for evaluating the success of Forest level programs.

* Solicit input from partners for annual fisheries program updates and recognize their contributions in active award programs.

* Ensure a strong working relationship between the Forest Service's Recreational and Fisheries Programs in the management of recreational fisheries on the National Forests at all levels.

* Expand recreational fishing opportunities on National Forests through access development for all anglers including specific emphasis for anglers with disabilities. Habitat enhancement must be consistent with fisheries and recreation program objectives, resource capabilities, and Forest Plans.

* Increase fishing opportunities for anglers with disabilities through implementation of the "Fishing Has No Boundaries" Memorandum of Understanding.

* Report on-the-ground accomplishments so that they appropriately reflect budget increases and respond to partnership investments in a manner easily understood by customers.

* Develop a close working relationship with the BLM in the implementation of the FS/BLM Recreational Fisheries Policy.

* Separate wildlife and fisheries issues at all levels of planning and budgeting. Ensure that fisheries be recognized in the title of staff units having fisheries responsibility and in the title and missions of Research work units conducting fisheries research.

* Determine the adequacy of the standards and guidelines in achieving the Forest Plan desired future condition and goals and objectives during monitoring and evaluation of plan implementation. Make changes as needed.

* Include direction for the management of habitats for the recovery of threatened and endangered species and conservation of sensitive species on National Forests. Management direction should include aquatic species and their habitats that may be approaching critically low population levels so as to prevent the need for Federal listing.

Review and update RTTF fisheries policies, goals, objectives, and direction with local and national partners.

1991 and every 3 years - WO

B. Technical Capabilities

Through the development of close relationships among fisheries biologists, fisheries research scientists, universities, other agencies, and the continuing education modules, the Forest Service has significantly elevated the technical capability of field fisheries biologists. From this capability, more effective protection and enhancement projects have occurred on the ground. These projects have benefitted the diverse fisheries resource and aquatic habitat throughout the National Forest System.

Research and NFS worked closely together developing the National Assessment of Fishery Research Needs which will assist the Stations in identifying and meeting the fisheries research needs of the Regions and Forests.

The application and refinement of inventory and monitoring methods and the ecologically sound evaluation of collected data will be critical to the credibility and continued growth and development of Forest fisheries programs through Forest Plan implementation. For maximum program effectiveness, it is essential that the development and implementation of fisheries management activities be based on a strong scientific foundation, incorporate state-of-the-art technology, and involve coordination with other resources and external partners.

Action Items

Develop Regional strategies for ensuring the integration of the most current technology in the management of the fisheries resource appropriate for each Region.

1992 - RO, SO, RD, Stations

* Develop, implement, and refine methods for assessing cumulative effects for those land management activities affecting riparian and fisheries habitat values and for evaluating aquatic TES protection and enhancement efforts.

* Coordinate input from Research, academic institutions, Fish Habitat Relations Program, and other partners in the evaluation of inventory data and formulation of management prescriptions.

* Coordinate annual programs of work with the Research Stations to ensure that Forest fishery research needs are met and fully utilized in developing state-of-the-art habitat restoration and enhancement techniques. Incorporate NFS fisheries information needs in Stations annual program development. Update Research/Information Needs section of Forest Plans as needed.

* Involve hydrologists, engineers, landscape architects, and other disciplines as appropriate in the design and construction of fish habitat enhancement projects. Work closely with hydrologists in the classification of stream systems and drainage basin response units.

* Obtain a better understanding of the status and trends of aquatic TES species and habitats and their conservation. Develop an integrated approach to aquatic TES management and research emphasizing ecosystem and biodiversity concepts.

Update integrated Forest Plan monitoring programs to ensure credible evaluation of the effectiveness of best management practices. Involve states, federal agencies, Research, and external partners.

1992 - WO, RO, SO, RD, Stations

Publish the National Assessment of Fishery Research Needs.

1991 - WO

Use the National Assessment of Fishery Research Needs to coordinate Research and NFS budget proposals.

1991 and on-going - WO, RO, SO, RD, Stations

C. Cooperation and Public Information

A major contribution to the success of RTTF has been the development of strong partnerships with States, other federal agencies, constituents, and local fishing interests. These excellent partnerships, from the national level to the field, have been successful in developing strong public ownership in the management of fisheries within the Forest Service. Formal agreements have been made with many groups, such as the American Fisheries Society, Sport Fishing Institute, Federation of Fly Fishers, Trout Unlimited, Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, and Amerifish Corporation. Through the successful Challenge Cost-Share Program, Forests have worked closely with many State, Federal, and Tribal governments, constituency groups, and local fishing interests in projects designed to help benefit the fisheries resource and increase fishing opportunities. A FS/TU coordinator position was established in 1989 to encourage and coordinate TU volunteer efforts on NFS land. The Forest Service has become the lead participating agency in National Fishing Week Activities. Implementation of the FS/BLM Recreational Fisheries Policy, jointly signed between the Forest Service and BLM in 1990, was an important step forward in further strengthening internal and external partnerships in the management of recreational fishing.

The promotion of the fisheries resources and fishing opportunities on National Forests also has contributed significantly to the success of RTTF. This also has increased public awareness of the important role the Forest Service has in fish habitat management.

Action Items

Develop marketing strategies at all levels to recognize program accomplishments and to inform the public of the habitat improvement and the fishing opportunities available on National Forests and Grasslands.

1992 and on-going - WO, RO, RD, Stations

* Develop a consistent and credible method for measuring the attitudes and needs of the fishing public and incorporate the results back into Forest Plan goals and objectives.

* Provide increased opportunities for informing line officers and fish and recreation staff officers of the diverse needs of the fisheries resources and of the values of recreational, subsistence, and commercial fishing.

* Actively promote a national fishing and environmental conservation ethic based upon resource stewardship and promote it through the development of national and local resource education programs.

* Provide annual or semi-annual presentations to external audiences on the fisheries program and fishing opportunities.

* Develop and update marketing/promotional products (brochures, displays, videos, etc.) designed to inform the public of the Forest Service's role in fisheries resource management and of the fishing opportunities and non-consumptive uses of fish found on National Forests. Fishing opportunities are to include those designed for meeting the needs of all anglers, including those with disabilities. Efforts should be made to effectively describe the aquatic TES program and instill a positive image in aquatic TES management.

Develop guidelines for establishing partnerships and for evaluating effectiveness of partnership programs. Improve understanding of cooperative opportunities and authorities (e.g. Sikes Act, Wallop-Breaux, and Challenge Cost Share Program) and of the administrative and fiscal procedures for developing partnerships.

1992 - WO, RO

* Develop internal partnerships among the staff functions (i.e. Wildlife and Fisheries, Watershed, Recreation, Research, etc.) in the management of the fisheries resource and recreational fishing. Utilize informal and formal get-togethers and meetings to bring staff groups closer together.

* Meet at least annually with local Congressional staffs and conduct field reviews to discuss and review program accomplishments and future goals.

Increase Forest and public involvement in National Fishing Week (NFW) activities on NFS land. Closely coordinate NFW activities between fisheries and recreation programs at all levels. Each National Forest conduct at least one fishing event during NFW beginning in 1991.

1991 and on-going - *WO, RO, DO, RD*

D. Fish and Fishing Economics

The Nation's commercial, subsistence, and recreational fisheries resources provide substantial benefits to all Americans and to the national economy. On National Forests, these benefits are dependent upon the management of healthy and productive aquatic habitats. Each year, anglers spend more than 15 million days (based on a 12 hour day) and 1 billion dollars on fishing that is attributed to NFS aquatic resources. Recreational fishing generates support for almost 60 thousand jobs. In addition to sport fishing, the National Forests contribute significantly to subsistence and commercial fishing. Annually, more than 150 million pounds of anadromous fish that originate from National Forests are harvested commercially. These fish bring a dockside value of more than a quarter of a billion dollars. Nearly 1.4 million pounds of anadromous fish are harvested annually for subsistence use and have a retail value of 6.8 million dollars.

In 1990, the *Fishery Resources of the National Forest System* and an accompanying color brochure were developed cooperatively with the Sport Fishing Institute to emphasize the economic importance of fishing attributed to the NFS.

Action Items

Update fishery values every 5 years to establish economic values of fishing attributable to the National Forests.

1991 and on-going - WO

* Improve methods for assessing fish populations and their habitats and fishing demands for use in updating RPA fisheries values.

Conduct inventories to determine angler needs and expectations and assess the economic impacts that fishing has on rural communities.

1992 - WO, RO, SO

* Determine the fisheries economic potential for those rural communities that are converting from a commodity-oriented resource economic base to one that is more dependent upon the recreational fisheries resources. Conduct the study in cooperation with partners.

* Increase focus on customer satisfaction as a program output.

* Establish survey procedures in cooperation with the states to evaluate fishing use and angler satisfaction on lakes, ponds, and streams. Use this information in the planning process.

E. Fisheries Personnel

As a direct result of RTTF, the number of Forest Service fisheries biologists has increased from 110 in 1986 to 245 by early 1991. The number of fisheries research scientists has increased from 10 to 16 during the same time frame. The number of fisheries technicians as well as other personnel doing fisheries related work has also increased substantially. The fisheries workforce has become more diverse, reflecting the make-up of the society, with the percentage of female and minorities in fishery biologist positions in the FS increasing from 20 percent to 40 percent. An increasing number of fisheries biologists have elected to move into line and staff officer positions. With increased emphasis of fisheries management within the FS, the fisheries biologist has become more active as a team player involved in the overall management of the Forest resources.

The role of Forest Service fisheries biologists has changed significantly since the initiation of the RTTF Fisheries program in 1987. The program elevated visibility of National Forest fisheries resources and identified the high demand for its use. With the increased visibility of the program came an increasing agency awareness of the importance of strong program direction in fisheries and higher expectations from the skills and abilities of fisheries staff. Never before has the role of the biologist as a team player, resource manager, and salesperson been so important. The ability to competently collect and analyze technical data alone is no longer sufficient. A greater array of skills are now needed in effective communication, program development, economic analysis, budgeting, and Forest resource planning. The Forest fisheries biologist must be creative, innovative, and people-oriented to develop effective and creditable programs. The biologist must be able to identify program direction and effectively communicate the vision of the program internally as well as to outside partners.

Action Items

Conduct workforce analyses to determine appropriate fisheries biologist and fishery research scientists workforce necessary to fully implement the fisheries program at all levels. Develop recruitment programs and recruit to meet workforce needs.

1992 - WO, RO, SO, RD, Stations

* Recruit a workforce reflective of the makeup of the available population of fully qualified fisheries professionals.

* Inform students at all levels of education of the opportunities of making a career in the FS as a fisheries biologist/research scientists.

* Develop educational curricula at the undergraduate and graduate level that relate to aquatic habitat management in cooperation with academic institutions.

Ensure fisheries biologists have the necessary training and experience needed to most effectively develop and manage the fisheries resources on National Forests. Provide them opportunities for pursuing line, staff, and other positions within the agency.

1992 and on-going - WO, RO, SO, RD, Stations

* Ensure that within 3 years of entry date, new fish biologists have completed the Leadership and Fish Habitat shortcourses.

* Ensure that within 5 years of entry date, fish biologists have completed, at a minimum, the Managing Forest Structure and Composition, and Fisheries Program Management shortcourses.

* Ensure the fisheries biologists series is identified for interdisciplinary positions and advertise fisheries-related job vacancies as widely as possible.

* Provide necessary training for fisheries biologists that emphasizes written and oral communication skills.

* Increase public communication by having biologists write news articles and give presentations at management team meetings, fisheries and other resource professional meetings, and to civic groups.

* Incorporate communication skills into the fisheries biologist performance standards.

* Develop and implement a 1 to 2 week course to enhance program development skills to be available to all fisheries biologists.

* Provide Interdisciplinary Team training to all fisheries biologists within one year after hiring.

* Provide the necessary training and experience to ensure fisheries biologists are using the most current state-of-the-art technology in fisheries management.

* Provide opportunities for fisheries biologists to participate in inter-Regional and Washington Office details as part of their training program.

* Provide the training necessary to ensure that fisheries biologists are skilled in aquatic ecosystem management and biodiversity concepts.

Summary

The Forest Service has made major strides in strengthening its role in fisheries habitat management on National Forests since Rise to the Future evolved from its infancy in 1987. The quality of fish habitats are being improved as never before to support larger and healthier fish populations. Major efforts are being made to provide fishing access for the growing numbers of American anglers who seek out quality and diverse fishing opportunities on National Forests. Customer satisfaction is emphasized to ensure that the aquatic resources found on the National Forests and National Grasslands are being managed to not only meet the needs of the resources but the demands of the public as well. The high level of success that the Forest Service has experienced in the management of fisheries over the past 4 years has largely been attributed to the many partnerships developed, internally as well as externally. It is through the strengths of these partnerships, along with the talents and vision of its people, that the Forest Service will continue to make major strides forward in the management of its valuable fisheries resources. Implementation of this updated Rise to the Future action plan will contribute toward attainment of these goals.